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Its contents do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Community institutions.



AIDS: No systematic border controls

EC health ministers agree to coordinate their policies.

European Community health ministers are agreed that the fight against AIDS must be waged by the Community. But border controls, including compulsory screening, are not the best way of limiting the spread of the disease, in their view.

The ministers, who met in Brussels on May 15, have asked a group of experts from the member states to propose measures for: (1) exchanges of information both as to the spread of the disease and the various measures, either envisaged or already taken, by the member governments; (2) joint action against AIDS and (3) ways of checking on the effectiveness of the measures already in force.

In a joint statement the ministers declared AIDS to be "a health problem". Measures to fight it must be based, therefore, on considerations of public health. The declaration was a response both to those who regard AIDS as a question of morality and those who want systematic controls on certain categories of individuals.

The ministers clearly regard compulsory screening, especially at borders, as ineffective. They agreed, however, to provide detailed information on AIDS to all those travelling from one country to another. They will also try to avoid pursuing contradictory policies, especially when it comes to dealing with people entering the Community from outside.

The health ministers also approved the principle of an information campaign on cancer, which the European Commission had proposed for the period 1987 to 1989, in the framework of the programme "Europe Against Cancer". They were unable, however, to agree on the sums to be devoted to the campaign from the Community budget.

Belgium's state secretary for health, Mrs Demeester-De Meyer, who chaired the Council meeting, proposed that a regulation banning smoking in all public places come into force throughout the 12-nation Community from 1 January 1989, and in the Community's own establishments from 1 September 1987. This is the date on which Belgium's own ban on smoking in public places comes into force.

TELEVISION: The pirates of the radio wave

The EC must give itself the means to fight against audiovisual piracy.

There are over 25m. videotape recorders in Europe and their number is rising at supersonic speed, to the delight of audiovisual pirates, whose activities are estimated to cost the European Community countries some ECU 200m.\* a year. But the member states are not the only ones to be affected, for the problem is worldwide. Thus the annual cost to the United States has been put at ECU 1,000m. In Japan roughly half the 14 billion videocassettes in use are pirated copies, resulting in an estimated ECU 200m. loss each year. Pirated copies have captured almost the entire Southeast Asian market.

The Jolly Roger seems to be flying high in all parts of the world and the war against these modern freebooters appears lost in advance. But it need not be. In Europe, for example, Britain is fighting back. Some 66% of the U.K. market was in the hands of audiovisual pirates in 1982. The introduction of strong legal measures brought the level down to 30% in 1983, 20% in 1984 and 15% in 1985 - that is, to a level slightly above what is considered "physiologically" acceptable.

In Germany, where the rate was close to 60%, the vigorous action undertaken by the authorities has already brought it down to 45%. Although France regards itself as "well protected", pirates have taken between 20 to 25% of the market. In Spain, however, their market share has fallen from 90% in 1982 to 30% last June, and in the Netherlands from 70 to 45%.

Clearly something can be done, which is why it is essential to set Community standards against the illegal reproduction of works for commercial ends, as the European information commissioner, Carlo Ripa di Meana, underlined during a seminar on audiovisual piracy organized at Cannes by the International Federation of Film Distributors.

All Community countries have raised the penalties for audiovisual piracy; in several of them it is now punishable by imprisonment, and those found guilty can no longer hope to get away with a fine.

Unfortunately technical developments favour the pirates. Closer collaboration between the member states, the establishment of a European public register and stricter customs control of imported products, seem to be the only way of fighting this modern scourge.

The Commission plans shortly to present a text on this subject and to send it to the EC Council of Ministers before the end of the year. It will seek to identify the methods best adopted to fighting against the audiovisual pirates: appropriate exclusive rights; penalties which are really effective and adequate measures for tracking down and confiscating material.

\* 1 ECU = UK£ 0.70 or IR£ 0.78

WILDLIFE: Saving the elephant from the poacher's gun

The trade in ivory is an open invitation to kill.

A collection of 17,400 elephant tusks represents the death of some 9,000 animals. This amounts to large-scale slaughter, given the number of elephants that still survive, despite massacres and the deterioration of their habitat.

And yet those 17,400 tusks represented just one shipment received from Burundi at the port of Antwerp a few months ago, duly accompanied by the necessary export authorizations. Burundi, however, is not a producer of ivory and has not adhered to the Convention on international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora (CITES), in force in the European Community since 1 January 1984. It is not bound, therefore, by the Convention's somewhat restrictive provisions.

Even so, tusks reach this African country in transit to other destinations, in violation of the Convention. It is only since 1 September 1986, following an attempt by the CITES Secretariat, that the government of Burundi has decided to follow the procedures for controlling trade in ivory and to authorize only those imports which meet all the provisions of the Convention.

The issue was raised with the European Commission by the Belgian Euro-MP, Luc Beyer de Ryke. In his reply Commissioner Clinton Davis stressed the importance of the change in policy in Burundi. The transfer of the above-mentioned stock to a bonded warehouse in Antwerp was an additional safety measure, aimed at guaranteeing that the procedures laid down by the CITES were respected.

ENVIRONMENT: A new profession - environment advisor

The European Commission wants to replicate a successful Hamburg experiment.

How do you save water and energy, avoid using dangerous chemicals as much as possible and dispose of wastes "cleanly"? Questions such as these, which increasingly preoccupy Europeans, are being answered in Hamburg by paid specialists. Thanks to help from the European Commission, the experiment will be extended to a dozen European cities, among them Birmingham and Coventry\*. The others are in France, Germany and Spain.

Some 100 environment advisors are currently working in 50 German municipalities. The association in Hamburg which launched the initiative organized a training course for some 40 future environment advisors in Strassbourg in mid-May, with the support of the European Commission.

These advisors will carry out their duties in consultation as well as in homes and on company premises. The European Commission is providing ECU 220,000\* for the operation.

\* Environmental Health and Consumer Services Department, Broadgate House, Broadgate, Coventry (Tel: 0203/25555 - Ms. J. Markham); Birmingham Settlement Centre for Urban Ecology, 318 Sumner Lane, Birmingham B19 3RL (Tel: 021/359 3562 - Mr. P. Houghton) and Bournville Village Trust, Estate Office, One Tree Lane, Birmingham B30 10B (Tel: 021/472 2948 - Prof. E. Rose).

TRANSPORT: Community funds for the Channel Tunnel

The EIB to lend Eurotunnel ECU 1,400m.\*

There is light at the end of the Channel tunnel. The European Community's bank for long-term finance, the European Investment Bank, has agreed to back the project by providing a total of ECU 1,400m. in loans. An announcement to this effect was made on May 13 by the EIB.

After having carried out its own analysis of the project submitted by Eurotunnel, and accepted by the governments of the U.K. and France, the EIB found it perfectly viable, both technically and financially. The Bank is of the view that the tunnel "is of exceptional importance for the development of a European transport network" and that it "will provide a strong stimulus to the European economy".

The EIB loans will be spread out over the entire construction period (1988-93). They will be granted for periods of up to 25 years, if necessary, and will not be guaranteed by either of the two governments directly interested in the project.

At a time when some financial institutions have expressed doubts over the value of the project, the EIB's decision could make all the difference.

\* 1 ECU = UK£ 0.70 or IR£ 0.78

EDUCATION: Cross-frontier studies for over 25,000 students

EC Education Ministers adopt ERASMUS.

Over a 3-year period more than 25,000 students from the 12 European Community countries will be able to spend time at a university in another Community country and have it count towards their degree. For both the idea and the necessary funds to carry it out they will have to thank the ERASMUS programme, put forward by the European Commission nearly 18 months ago and adopted by EC education ministers on May 14.

ERASMUS in fact is an acronym for the European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students. It is the first large-scale programme which seeks to encourage student exchange at the Community level.

The programme will make possible a vast cooperative network of European universities, based on the 600 or so institutions which have already entered into exchange agreements. The members of the network will organize exchanges of students and professors among themselves.

Thanks to ERASMUS, students who choose to follow, in another Community country, a course of studies recognized in their own will receive a scholarship amounting to ECU 2,000\* on average to cover travel costs. They will be exempted from registration fees in the second university and will continue to receive any maintenance grants paid to them in their home countries.

The ERASMUS programme will also make easier academic recognition of degrees and study periods in other member states.

The Community will provide some ECU 85m. in all during the three academic years from 1987 to 1990. Nearly two-thirds of this will pay for the scholarships. The European Commission had asked for twice as much, but it met with strong resistance from Britain, France and Germany.

Despite the delay in its adoption, the ERASMUS programme could start this year, if more slowly than foreseen, given that the money available is within the initial forecast. The European Commission is hoping ERASMUS will continue beyond the three years provided for by the ministers, to become a permanent feature of the educational landscape.

\* 1 ECU = UK£ 0.70 or IR£ 0.78.

HOLIDAYS: A horde of nomads

More than 140m. Europeans leave on holiday each year - and this figure doesn't include their children.

As many as 143m. adult Europeans, out of 254m., left on holiday for at least four days in 1985. Some 58m. could not do so that year for a variety of reasons. But they had been on vacation the previous year and planned to leave again the following year. Another 53m. always take their holidays at home, however.

Of the 143m. who left, nearly 50m. did so more than once, while only 1% refused to talk about their holidays. As for those who stayed put, nearly half (44%) did so because they did not have the wherewithal. Others preferred to stay at home, while yet others were obliged to do so because of their work (16%), health or family reasons (22%) or for more than one reason.

Among the most dedicated holiday makers were the Dutch, who led the Danes by a short head: 2 out of 3 Dutchmen take a holiday each year. They were closely followed by the British, the Germans, French, Luxembourgers and Italians. In five other Community countries holidaymakers were in a minority: 46% in Greece, 44% in Spain, 41% in Belgium, 39% in Ireland and 31% in Portugal.

The most surprising were the Belgians. Relatively few of them leave on holiday - and yet Belgium is one of the richer Community countries and is located in the colder northern climes.

Holidaymakers showed a clear preference for the summer months, especially July and August. This is when 62% of them take their main holidays, 21% other holidays. The average duration of the first is 17 days, of the second 10 days.

In both cases, most Europeans (68%) go on holiday by car. However, some 14% go by train, 13% by air, 10% by bus and 5% by boat. Some use several of these means of transport on the same holiday, while others bicycle or use other means of locomotion, including their own two feet.

One-third of Europeans prefer to put up at hotels, while 17% move into rented accommodation. Another 16% turn up at camp sites and 31% turn up at homes of friends and relatives. While one holidaymaker in five goes on a package tour, the rest manage on their own.

Most holidaymakers manage to have a good time into the bargain. Their satisfaction rating was a high 8.2 out of 10, regardless of whether they went abroad (30%), or stayed at home (70%), whether they were at the seaside (52%) or in the country (25%), the mountains (23%) or in one or more cities (29%).

As for the country of destination, the four that holidaymakers found irresistible were Greece, followed very closely by Spain, Italy and France. When it came to countries already visited, France led the field with 34% of the replies, followed by Spain (30%) and Italy (28%). Only 31% of the Community's citizens have not visited, at least once, another member state, and nearly all would like to do so or go back.

Europeans love to travel, as these figures show. They are taken from a survey, which is jam-packed with them. It was carried out on behalf of the European Commission and even armchair travellers will feel a certain wanderlust as they thumb through it.

#### TRANSPORT: No rest for HGV drivers?

Truck drivers do not always follow the rules on driving hours and rest periods.

The driver of a heavy goods vehicle who dozes off at the wheel can wreak havoc. An Austrian survey of HGV drivers reportedly revealed nearly 15,000 cases in which logbooks were not kept up-to-date, or at least did not show hours worked and rest periods taken.

In the European Community the member states send the European Commission every year all the information at their disposal regarding, among other things, the administrative organization, methods of checking, infringements recorded and penalties.

The picture is not always a reassuring one and the Commission in the past has called on member states to strengthen checks, both at the roadside and within firms, as Commissioner Stanley Clinton Davis has pointed out in his reply to the Belgian Euro-MP, François Roelants du Vivier. The Council of Ministers adopted a resolution aimed at raising the quality and number of these checks and making penalties stronger. The Commission will ensure that the member states act along these lines.



INTERNAL MARKET: The Twelve fail to keep to their time-table

The European Commission takes to task ministers, Euro-MPs and ... its own officials.

If it is to meet its goal of a single internal market by the end of 1992, the 12-nation European Community will have to make better time, because what has been achieved over the last 12 months is insufficient. This is the main conclusion of the European Commission's second annual report on the implementation of its White Paper, which sets out some 300 proposals needed to complete the internal market and approved by the Community's heads of state and government.

The Commission considers the results to date as "disappointing but not discouraging". According to the report, each of the Community's three major institutions shares responsibility for the failure to keep to the time-table for a Europe without frontiers.

To begin with, the Community decision-making body, the Council of Ministers, has so far adopted only 57 of the 169 proposals it has received from the Commission. If the ministers who specialize in questions relating to the internal market have done well, their colleagues from agriculture and finance have made little progress.

The Commission itself has failed to reach the targets it set itself. It must still finalize 31 of the 200 proposals for which the deadline has already passed. Here, too, the delay is mainly in the agro-food sector.

As for the European Parliament, whose opinion is essential before ministers can adopt proposals relating to the single market, it too is proving excessively slow according to the report. Last year two proposals could not be adopted simply because Parliament had not delivered its opinion.

In its report the Commission expresses its concern over the fate of the Single European Act, which up-dates the "European Constitution". It should have come into force at the beginning of the year, but this now depends on the outcome of the Irish referendum, set for May 26.

The Single Act, which provides for numerous decisions to be taken by majority vote rather than unanimously, should enable the EC Council of Ministers to make better speed.